

Message Text

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S E C R E T DAMASCUS 2183

NODIS

FOR SECRETARY FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR PINS PINT LE SY US
SUBJ: ASAD COMMENTS ON SECURITY FORCE PLANNING FOR LEBANON

REF: DAMASCUS 2180

1. DAOUDI CALLED ME TO PRESIDENCY AT 2000L TO
CONVEY MESSAGE FROM ASAD CONCERNING PLANNING ABOUT SECURITY
FORCES FOR LEBANON AND LEBANESE RECONSTRUCTION. READING FROM HAND-
WRITTEN SHEET WHICH HE SAID HAD BEEN
DICTATED TO HIM BY ASAD THIS AFTERNOON, DAOUDI STATED:

QTE. WHAT SYRIA IS CONCERNED ABOUT AND WHAT IT IS SEEKING
TO DO IS TO STOP THE FIGHTING IN LEBANON, TO PUT AN END TO THE
BLOODBATH AND TO THINK ABOUT A PRACTICAL FORMULA WHICH
WOULD ASSURE THE CONTINUITY OF PEACE AND SECURITY.
WE, THEREFORE, SEE THE PROBLEM AS FOLLOWS:

A. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT THE CONSTITUTION OF A JOINT FORCE
CONTRIBUTED BY THE WARRING FACTIONS TO SAFEGUARD THE
COUNTRY'S SECURITY COULD BE A PRACTICAL ARRANGEMENT. SHOULD SUCH
A STEP BE TAKEN IT WOULD BE AT BEST NO MORE THAN A TRUCE LIABLE
TO EXPLODE AT ANY MOMENT.

B. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THE WARRING FACTIONS IN LEBANON
WOULD AGREE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF AN INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM

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TO ASSIST IN REBUILDING THE MILITARY AND

POLICE FORCES. WE ALSO CONSIDER THAT THIS IDEA WILL NOT BE USEFUL AS REGARDS THE LEBANESE NATIONAL INTEREST.

C. AS FAR AS ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE TO LEBANON IS CONCERNED, WE WELCOME ANY FORMULA WHICH WILL HELP LEBANON RECONSTRUCT ITS ECONOMY.

D. SYRIAN OPINION COULD BE SUMMARIZED AS OUR READINESS TO RESPOND AND TO OFFER, WITHIN THE LIMITS OF OUR POSSIBILITIES, ANY ASSISTANCE WHICH MAY BE ASKED OR REQUIRED BY THE NEW PRESIDENT OF LEBANON.

E. CONCERNING POSSIBLE USG CONTACTS WITH THE PLO, THE PRESIDENT HAS NO OBJECTION. THE DECISION IS ONE FOR THE PLO AND THE USG TO MAKE. UNQTE.

2. I ASKED IF ASAD HAD DISCUSSED ANY OTHER WAY TO HELP ASSURE SHORT RUN SECURITY IN LEBANON, THAN THE IDEA WHICH AMBASSADOR BROWN HAD PROPOSED ON PERSONAL BASIS. DAOUDI SAID MY QUESTION WAS EFFECTIVELY ANSWERED BY POINT IN PARA 1D ABOVE. HE THEN EXPANDED A BIT RECALLING OUR MESSAGE THAT THE THREE MARONITE LEADERS HAD NOT AGREED ON THE IDEA OF A JOINT SECURITY FORCE. WITH JAMAYYEL PRO, FRANJIE SCEPTICAL AND CHAMOUN OPPOSED, WE OURSELVES HAD SPOTTED THE DISUNITY WITHIN THE MARONITE CAMP. THERE WOULD PREDICTABLY BE ADDITIONAL AND CONFLICTING OPINIONS ON THE PART OF OTHER LEBANESE FACTIONS. "YOU MIGHT CONVINCE THEM TO DO SOMETHING TODAY THAT WOULD ONLY BREAK DOWN TOMORROW. IT IS BETTER TO AVOID CREATING ANY STRUCTURE WHICH CARRIES WITHIN ITSELF A GREAT RISK OF TRIGGERING RENEWED FIGHTING."

3. IN A FURTHER GLOSS ON ASAD'S MESSAGE, DAOUDI SAID THAT SYRIA CONSIDERED IT ESSENTIAL THAT ALL PARTIES NOW AWAIT THE ELECTION OF A NEW PRESIDENT IN LEBANON AND HIS REQUESTS FOR ASSISTANCE BE IT IN THE FIELDS OF RECONSTRUCTION OF THE SECURITY FORCE OR OF THE ECONOMY. AS FAR AS SYRIA IS CONCERNED, "DAMASCUS HAS BEEN PLAYING A TEMPORARY ROLE IN AN EFFORT TO BE HELPFUL. IT WILL NOT GET IN TOO DEEP."

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4. ASKED DAOUDI HOW WIDELY YOUR MESSAGES CONCERNING LEBANON HAD BEEN SHARED BY ASAD. HE REPLIED THAT TO BEST OF HIS KNOWLEDGE THE FULL TEXTS HAD BEEN SEEN BY ONLY THREE MEN, THE PRESIDENT, HIS TRANSLATOR (ASAD ELIAS) AND HIMSELF, DAOUDI. HE DID NOT RULE OUT POSSIBILITY THAT ASAD HAD MENTIONED TO KHADDAM IN GENERAL TERMS THAT HE WAS HAVING AN EXCHANGE OF MESSAGES WITH YOU ABOUT LEBANON. BUT HE DOUBTED THAT EVEN KHADDAM HAD HAD ACCESS TO DETAILED

TEXTS. THANKED HIM FOR THIS CLARIFICATION. SAID I
HAD NOT DISCUSSED THEM WITH ANY SYRIAN OTHER THAN HIMSELF AND
WOULD NOT DO SO. NOTED I KNEW YOU WOULD
APPRECIATE KNOWING HOW CLOSELY YOUR MESSAGES HAD BEEN HELD BY ASAD.

5. COMMENT. ASAD'S MESSAGE CARRIES STRONG IMPLICATION THAT HE EXPECTS
NEW PRESIDENT OF LEBANON TO OPPOSE ANY BUT SYRIAN INPUT IN THE
SECURITY FIELD IF OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED. IN THE SHORT RUN,
I WOULD JUDGE BASED ON THE MESSAGE THAT HE INTENDS CONTINUE PLAY
ACTIVE ROLE ASSURING CONTINUANCE OF CEASEFIRE. IMMEDIATELY
FOLLOWING MESSAGE REPORTS DAO DAMASCUS OBSERVATION
TONIGHT THAT ADDITIONAL FORCES ARE RIGHT NOW (2200L) TRANSITTING
DAMASCUS ENROUTE TO THE BORDER. THEY INCLUDE LARGE NUMBER
OF TANKS.
MURPHY

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